

RATE OF FIRE

The Newsletter of the Paddington Bears ASL Club



Issue 15
Summer 2000

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*The Newsletter of the Paddington
Bears ASL Club*

This newsletter is dedicated to the play of Advanced Squad Leader ©, and the players and news of the ASL community in Australia.

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I would also encourage players everywhere to take several copies to local game stores to be provided **Free of Charge** to any interested gamers.

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To make a submission, send your piece either by email or by mail me. I will return any item with comments I feel needs more work. Otherwise, I may refer the item to an independent proofreader and reviewer to check that the item is substantially correct and readable. It will then be included in the next appropriate issue.

There is no particular size limit for Rate of Fire, I will issue what I have. Given sufficient submissions, I may make an attempt to do Special interest issues, grouping submissions by subject. From time to time I will request players to write articles for the newsletter. Please consider these as "my last editorial demand" to paraphrase a famous German leader

Mark McGilchrist (Editor)



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FOREWORD

Hi,

Seems like most of the action has been overseas of late, with the ASL World Tour of Paul Haseler, David Longworth and Steve Linton being the major news for this issue. To add to their travelling tales, Neil Andrews tells his own travel yarn of his visit to Sydney for the OtoBear!

With Australian troops are again serving in Timor, or rather East Timor, this time as part of the United Nations INTERFET Peacekeeping force. For that reason it is perhaps worth reviewing the relationship between Australia and East Timor, how it started, why Australian troops were sent in WW2, and what lessons there are to be learned from the WW2 experience.

More generally, an overall look at the Australian Army of WW2, it's recruitment and organisation in the same spirit as those *ASL Annual* and *The General* articles on other nationalities is long overdue.

Hope you enjoy this issue, material seems to be getting a little thin this time round, so if you have an idea, write it up! Items I'd love to see include;

- Australian unit histories
- PBP scenario AARs
- An indepth history of Australian armour in the SW Pacific Theatre

Happy New Year!

**Mark McGilchrist
Editor**

The 1999 ASL World Tour

by Paul Haseler (and *Steve Linton*)

Early this year, I became aware that my work commitments would stop me from having much time off in 2000.

Consequently I decided to take as long a holiday as possible in late 1999, and to put some tournaments on my itinerary. October 1999 was ripe with possibilities, because the Mecca of ASL has to be ASLOK (ASL Oktoberfest) in the USA. That became the first objective and the plans for world touring grew from there. Steve Linton was also happened to be planning a holiday at that time of year. Despite our efforts to keep it a secret from the Dark Side, the scheming Captain Nutrageous booked himself a seat on the same flights; thus a privileged group of Australian ASL players embarked on an ASL pilgrimage.

The adventure began with all of us at OCTOBear in Sydney on the first weekend, almost immediately followed by six days in Cleveland, Ohio at ASLOK. Then we went our various ways across the States. Dave Longworth and I headed to New York, while Steve went to Boston; then Dave returned to Australia via Florida, while Steve and I went on to different parts of Europe. Steve infiltrated Paris for the Montgeron tournament, and on the last weekend of October, we joined up at Intensive Fire in the UK. Three tournaments in a month for me and four for Steve appears to be obsessive, but 'too much ASL is never enough' (as our T-shirt said).

OCTOBear – Land of Oz

With no Victorian entrants and only one ACTian, numbers were down to a dozen this year. The absentees missed something good. The Operation Bagration structure was distinctly historical but fun to prepare for and play (and let's hear it for personal leader counters as a way of bringing role-playing to ASL: 'Oh, no! I've been captured/wounded/sniped'). I preferred the Russians (attacking with the numerical advantage), and I suspect that the Reds may have had a slight edge, but the basic concept worked well. My purchases were based on mobility and firepower, going for two AFV platoons in the first three scenarios (and one in the last, where assault engineers were mandatory).

In the first Saturday round, I was up against Al Smee, whose units were feeling uneasy about the 'free-gift' of a Russian creeping barrage (while I was trying to grasp those unfamiliar rules). The instinct for maximum mobility had persuaded me to buy a platoon each of 3x T34M43 and of 4x SU-76. I lost three AFVs killing his pair of StuGs, but I still had three for the end-game. This left Alan's dispersed infantry to be steadily ground down. At times, both of us felt the lash of the random 120mm barrage creeping onto vulnerable units, (like one of my OT assault guns).

In round 2, I had to take on the organiser (who was filling in as 12th player). Richard naturally had a good idea of what I might attack with, and constructed a thoughtful defence. The freebie for the Russians was one FB zooming overhead, so this meant his PzIV platoon skulked inside stone

buildings. Again, my tanks (3x T34/85 and 3x T34 M43) gave the opportunity to push hard on both flanks of the village, supported by Guards infantry and cavalry. He could not buy a hit against my hull-down T34s, and only took out one, while my excellent shooting (aka hot dice) took out both panzers and the flak-truck. Some bloody house clearing took place after that. My personal leader even rose to be an 8-1 by HOB...

At this point, reality raised its ugly head – I had been unable to complete a major work project before the end of the week, and I wanted to keep my job – so I withdrew from the Sunday rounds. By some Federal Government conspiracy, Steve Linton managed to get his grubby hands on the trophy (and congratulations). Next time his little red wagon will be just a burnt-out wreck!

Steve adds his point of view:

Such was my enthusiasm to start “the trip” that I was on the steps of the Paddington RSL just after 8 AM...and again just after 9, before some kind soul let me in. I forgot the RSL club’s preference for civilised 10AM start times (the building opens when the bar opens).

I’ve gone for the Germans – defending is my strong suit – and I’m quickly put to the test in round 1, where I draw Paul Seage. Fortunately for me, Paul has gone for mobility in the form of cavalry rather than swarms of AFVs, and I’m able to sit back and thin out his infantry while we both watch his OBA obliterate an empty trench.

Second round: Dave Wilson, who obviously has shares in aircraft manufacture, with air support on top of that provided by SSR. Dave’s attack is a bit slow early, enabling me to take on his forces piecemeal – though not failing any MCs didn’t hurt me, either.

Play of the day was undoubtedly the mistaken attack from his first FB, lines up a T34/85, direct hit, dud.

After another excellent evening socialising, I drew my host, Mr Longworth, in an open ground tank battle in round 3, and I have to attack... Hmm. I start cautiously, especially after losing a Panther to a classic move. This proves to be my saviour, as a glance around reveals several more aggressive Germans with serious casualties. With David covering all of the exits, my Tiger goes into hero mode, taking out two of his AFVs and clearing a path to the edge. With a fair bit of forbearance on David’s part, I get enough units off for the win.

Last round : Gordon McClelland. I put Captain Praxa and the HMG in the steeple to annoy him, and it works. His Russians can’t pass an MC, and I’ve got a ‘Shreck that works like a sniper. Looked bad for the Russians early, but Gordon perseveres, despite forgetting his OT-34 reinforcement, and is on the verge of overrunning my rear. Then he fires at a DM 247 with MMG – the resultant berserker holds up his entire centre until I can move to cover it, and his rush is stopped. Just to rub it in, I explode a HIP DC under his 10-2 killstack, and it is all over, red rover. More silverware for the sideboard.

Great fun, great food, and major thanks to the Captain for putting me up and to Richard for running the tournament.

ASLOK 1999 - USA (back to PaulH)
That project that I had to do on Sunday kept me at work through until 7 AM Monday, then I staggered home to shower/change/pack and get in a taxi to the airport with Longworth and Linton about 10.30 AM – and possibly to be awake for a further 36hrs on a crowded plane... Aaaargh! Needless to say that when we arrived in Cleveland (at

midnight on Monday), I was feeling very sorry for myself.

At times, ASLOK seems a bit weird, lacking structured rounds etc but it is definitely the most Awesome ASL Experience On The Planet. In fact, it is so free-form that some mornings it is hard to find an opponent amongst 183 other players (a new attendance record set this year, let's make it 200 in 2000) who are committed to various mini-tourneys. On the Tuesday everyone checked out the layout of the hotel, and played a couple of games to get in the mood (or to stay awake to overcome jetlag). The veteran Oz contingent equipped themselves with icebuckets filled with beer and soft-drink, ready for all eventualities (or so it seemed).

Unfortunately the only place I recorded my scenario results was on my Player Information Sheet that I handed in at the end of a tiring week.... but I clearly recall:

Winning a mini-tourney (General T-series), with a plaque for the bookshelf
Talking about our scenarios (admired by the majority and owned by many)

Winning 9 games against Americans and Europeans

Receiving 6 page fax from work during GROFAZ play (and later another 11 pages)

Being afraid to look at one opponent's DRs (for fear of yet another 2 or 3 etc)
Losing 3 games to American players.

During Wednesday night about 50 people visited the CH party in the executive suite, where their new modules and cold beers were on hand. Unfortunately this isn't the unifying social event that it used to be, and there needs to be one, since there is no other opportunity once the GROFAZ gaming starts (up to 24 hrs per day).

The new ABTF and BRT modules arrived on the Thursday night and went like hot cakes shown to a starving multitude. I played some ABTF scenarios and liked them – but didn't play any on the Tarawa map. MMP currently have four Bears scenarios (from SAGA '99) on offer and two of them are being fully playtested as I write (12/99). MMP may soon feature a couple within 'official' ASL publications. Russ Bunten and Curt Schilling are keen to see more material from Down Here in the future (and club members have been telling me they want more 'official' recognition).

The most popular scenarios of the week would have to be from the Schwerpunkt IV pack (and everyone played some – there are a couple of very good ones, a couple of woofers, and the others are decent. I highly recommend *A Stroke of Luck*). Mike McGrath's British/Indians slowly ran over Brett Hildebran's Japanese defenders *On The Manipur Road* for all the GROFAZ glory. McGrath took the trophy with an 8-0 result, since his one loss (to Steve Pleva) in a mini-final did not count for GROFAZ.

I was out of energy and out of contention by Saturday (and then racked up some wins in 'Open' gaming). Longworth did better (with overall results of 9-2 and also faced more notable opponents, though some were Very Slow Players) and Linton did better still (alleged to be 7-2 for GROFAZ, smug bastard!).

Steve demands a chance to skate:

It's a bit like a drug – you just keep playing and playing and playing. If you stop you fall asleep. From the Tuesday when, right off, I started with "Red Storm" to Sunday when I

finished with "Desantniki", I played 16 games of ASL – including 4 on one day.

I'd started out with the intention of playing in the mini tournaments – they looked like fun, and I was under no illusions – but these things develop a life of their own. After a hiccup on Wednesday when I lost to the slowest player on the planet, I hit a purple patch, even winning one legendary game of The Commissar's House despite falling asleep on turn 3. I won two mini-tournaments, and by late Friday, having already played (and won) 4 games for the day, I was 5-1 in the Grofaz – hell, McGrath was only 6-0! But that was as far as fate let me go – no-one would play me late on Friday, and on Saturday an average performance in Ace in the Hole saw me out of the running – mind you, I was in the last 10 or so, so I'm not complaining, and the 2 people who beat me came 3rd and 5th.

One thing – Alan Saltzman – the man responsible for both my and David's exit from the big one – must die. He's an affront to our national honour.

Montgeron - France

Steve continues:

After putting up with a couple of weeks tourism in Chicago and Boston, next stop on the tour was France, and the tournament at Montgeron. 30 players from all over France joined in a 4 round competition with an approach very similar to our own – 2 games a day and socialising at night – and an exceptionally friendly bunch of guys as well. Arnaud LeClerc, the organiser, not only hosts me for the duration, but also gives me a lesson in humility thrashing me in 2 of the Schwerpunkt 4 scenarios.

I win my first two games, and a place in the semi against France's number 3 player. Of the three scenarios on offer, we choose A Stiff Fight from the Journal, and it more than lived up to its name. It's a tight

scenario with no real break for either side, and the entire thing comes down to 3 CCs on the final turn. My Japanese needed to win all three, and after two it looked good – but a 6 on the ambush allows my opponent to withdraw, and I go down.

Last round is WCW's Eye of the Tiger – a game which proves the most enjoyable of my trip. What else can you say about a game where a T-34 shrugs off 3 hits from a Tiger, only to crash and burn on an IF CH? As the Germans, I grind my opponent Jean-Pierre Pouget into the dust for three turns, then he and a ridiculously heroic 458 return the favour for the following three turns. Fortunately for me, it's the Russians who have to do the last turn charge, and I'm able to hold them off. So 4th place, and yet another prize.

NB: For all of the ASL mailing lists debates about storage, they don't know jack. The French, with a research program of long standing, are light-years ahead of the rest of us. The Kong system, which we all so admire, is but the starter kit in a country where handmade wooden storage boxes with compartments for each specific AFV type are not uncommon. Plano is but a yellow belt in the school that is counter storage.

Intensive Fire '99 - UK

A day or two beforehand, I ran into Steve in the Imperial War Museum (of all places), feeling too cold-ridden and tired to lift a dice-cup. Having had nearly three weeks on an ASL-free diet, it took an effort to get on the Bournemouth bus with dice and charts and changes of underwear. Once I had checked into the Kiwi Hotel and sniffed the heady aromas of beer, sweat and cardboard, my ASL consciousness reasserted itself. Trev Edwards and I played a Test match of Ghost of Napoleon (and Oz supremacy was established). Later that afternoon,

Steve arrived and I had to explain that we were a player short of a team. Neil Moore had been scheduled to join us there, but his work had intervened. Luckily an ANZAC Team was still possible with the arrival of Malcolm Rutledge, a Kiwi who lives and works in Japan.

Friday morning was spent at the Tank Museum at Bovington (40 mins drive further into Dorset), and was worth every minute/pound spent there. All the tanks you can think of and then many more, old and new. Ever wondered why the Somua was so ineffective? Look inside and see what the commander had to cope with. I no longer wonder how fast or agile or smoky a Sherman was, since I've seen and heard an Easy Eight sliding and speeding on an unpaved road...

The actual tournament was fairly humdrum (reasonable playing standards in the top half of the draw, but not very exciting scenarios, and unsatisfactory scoring methods). Many of us played *Howard's Men*, *Shanghai In Flames* and *Shielding Moscow*, because they had high points value (for winners and losers) as opposed to being either entertaining or balanced etc.

The Sun-Bronzed ANZACs ended in 3rd place out of 16 teams competing, and we could have won if I had not lost close games to Toby and Paul, the two top Brits at the tournament... bah, humbug! In the individual player results, those two actually finished behind a Dane named Bjarne (who gets to play every week and hadn't lost a game in six months). I'd definitely play at IF again, if they improve the scoring system, and I'd recommend touring the ASL World to everyone.

Steve goes on a bit:

Shielding Moscow...as the Russian, and all he had to do was win. I don't know, Paul, I really don't (and yes, Paul is suitably ashamed etc).

I have to admit I found Intensive Fire a bit confusing, though probably more because I assumed I knew what was going on (and obviously didn't). With Paul H. and others, I forwent what was serious gaming time to venture to Bovington (and time well spent that was too!), and didn't even realise there was an individual tournament on. Maybe next time I travel 16,000 km, I'll read the tournament rules first.

I think the team approach is an excellent idea, while the scoring needs some work. There was a lot of reasonably good-natured rivalry between the sides, and while I may never forgive Paul for rendering my 3 wins out of 3 all for naught, I can't begrudge the Danes, who won their three games of Desantniki – including 2 as the Germans – to (almost) win the team prize (at least I think they won, but Paul thinks they came 2nd on a 'technicality').

As for the tour – it's a must. Sure, its expensive, time consuming and ensures that everyone questions your sanity: "You're going overseas for a month to do WHAT!?!)" but it's the best. After all, I got to play 30 games of ASL in a month, met some great people, had a hell of a lot of fun, won three competitions, got a prize at another and put up a good show in the biggest tournament in ASL. I've learnt new tricks, got lots and lots of new toys, and my wife says I can go again next year!

Mollusc assault on Pegasus Bridge!



In le Port, looking (south) across the street at the II13 church (and some Ox&Bucks and Para casualties are buried in the graveyard). [Ed. *Who's the babe Paul??*]

A stealthy SMC thinks about advancing over the 'hedge' into AA14 from the AA13 'road', with the town hall (where the Schoolhouse once was) slightly uphill in the background. The Z13 house has been boarded up for some time, judging by the overgrown gardens and rotting timbers.





A panorama (carefully spliced together) taken from the 'road' on the Z12-Y13 hexside, with (right to left), the house and stone wall in Z13 (close to how it might have looked in 1944), the remnant of the adjacent orchards, the BB14 area behind (now overgrown) where a drainage ditch still runs into the marsh area, the road (no longer as in 1944) leading up into Le Port, with trees masking that village apart from the steeple in II13 (and nearer, some new houses built post-war).



Standing at the AA17(?) irrigation ditch, looking across BB16 and CC16 marsh towards the steeple in II13 in Le Port.

CAPTAIN NUTRAGEOUS GOES AMERICA II – THE AGE OF NUTZ

On the 4th of October, 1999, a special QANTAS flight took off – the ASLOK express, direct flight, Sydney-Cleveland, taking three Bears on a voyage of discovery. Thoughts strange and unbidden filled my head – trepidations and fears, hopes and dreams, and the weight of the Australian ASL community rested on my shoulders. Had I remembered my dice cup? At long last, Captain Nutrageous was returning to ASLOK.

After making the unpleasant discovery that none of the movies were watchable, the long flight passed as monotonously as long flights always do, relieved only by the consumption of a Tom Clancy novel. Arrival at LA was smooth by comparison with previous experiences, with time to down a refreshing drink. As we got closer to Cleveland, the planes got smaller and the delays got bigger, our arrival barely beating the going-home time of the shuttle driver. We were driven to the ASLOK hotel (larger than I expected) in comfort, but Paul Haseler refused to tip the guy thereby earning us a sour look. After a minor confrontation over getting a roll-in bed for Steve Linton to sleep on, the journey was over.

The next day revealed a pleasant multiplicity of eating places within easy walk, including Damon's sports bar, Denny's, Dunkin Donuts, Olive Garden, Burger King, McDonalds, Pizza Hut, Perkins, not to mention others not patronised and since forgotten. After downing a Southern Slam at Denny's, and stocking up on essentials at the K-Mart across the street, we realised that ASLOK was up on the board in the hotel listing all the events. We dashed up to Room 504 (the listed venue) to find about 20 ASL players in attendance and many games underway! Precious gaming time was being wasted. The time had come to kick ass and chew gum.

First game was with 'Wild Bill' Hayward, one of the Cleveland hard core. We played 'Wollersheim', a Schwerpunkt scenario. I had the US and deployed to attack Bill's defence. A strong thrust down the left with a pinning attack on the right seemed to do the trick. The opening passed well enough as I made ground to the base of the victory hill. Fate then struck Bill a cruel blow as his 120 mm OBA red-carded out, robbing him of a key weapon. Despite the difficulty of moving across the benighted Bd 41 hill, the following win was straightforward. Bill fought honourably, but was defeated. Due to fatigue, play finished for the day.

With Wednesday came the Mediterranean mini-tournament. First up was against Tom Cvetinovitch in Faugh A'Ballagh. A simple little scenario, and it proved so in the playing. I used the tanks in their normal role as mobile smoke dispensers, and was able to smoke out most of Tom's positions and then overcome them in close combat. The TD met a similar fate – I think it was set up in a building or some such. Tom kept his troops forward a bit too long, and as a result it was over well before the end of the turn count.

Next round was up against Carl Norieuga, apparently a New England ASL legend of some sort or so I was informed. We settled on Assault on the Hotel Continental (another Schwerpunkt effort) as being balanced, although Carl thought it favoured the Germans slightly from a previous playing. I was happy to take the Kiwis, as I figured that any side with 24 squads to 12 and 3 tanks unopposed had to be in a good position. The toughest thing about this scenario was the dice rolls – my average must have been about 8 and Carl's must have been around 5.5. Nevertheless, I was able to persevere and got men into the victory building mainly by smoking out the opposition. The worm of chance turned at the end and I barooped his HMG nest with a Sherman CH. In the end, with a

Kiwi infantry battalion ten year re-union convention taking place in the hotel and a turn still to go, Carl graciously acknowledged defeat.

The final round, quite late in the evening, was against Kevin Valerian, a chap of pleasant manner and friendly nature. The choice of scenarios was poor, so we settled on The Professionals, a quirky old Annual scenario. I was happy to take the Yugos, as I was pretty tired and jet lagged by this stage and thought I could just do my set up and then let Kevin do all the moving. In due course I did my setup, then Kevin proceeded to set up his troops. This was the beginning of the horror, as Kev took *45 minutes* to do his unopposed opening move onto the board with six vehicles and about five squads on foot. The only resistance was a 2-2 long range MG shot! The second turn proceeded (my player turn took about a minute) and yep, there was no doubt about it – Kevin was simply the slowest player in the entire universe. Memories of Andrew Rogers and Paul Haseler faded into insignificance. If I was fresh, I could have withstood it, but I was so tired that even staying awake was difficult. Twice the struggle was lost and I nodded off during his turn, only to awaken with nothing changed. The game went equally poorly as the hapless cadets were swept aside with almost every attack failing. Fortunately the attack developed so slowly that I was able to crystallise a defence around the end of the bridge and entrench a squad on the far side. Kevin moved one tank onto the bridge and parked two hexes away from the squad at the far end. Then glory of glories, I realised that he had moved a second tank onto the bridge with a weight limit of only 25 tons!!!! I pointed this out politely and requested the collapse DR be made.

Kevin's reactions promptly went into turbodrive. With a 12 ms seek time, the tank was pulled back about three hexes onto the bank. He then leaned forward and said accusingly “How do YOU want to play it”. Thoughts of A.2 flashed through my mind, but obviously he came from a playing climate where mistakes were freely committed and excused, so I feebly allowed him to retract his no-brainer. With a satisfied nod, he promptly overran one of the guns instead. To the crime of slow play was added the shame of re-doing moves. A Paddington Bear wouldn't even have asked. Later in the phase I pivoted the AT gun and intensive fired, rolling a 3 to hit and killing the tank on the bridge. On the last turn, the remaining halftrack (the other one having been recalled by a sniper) loaded up and dashed through the gauntlet to safety on the far side, winning the game. Even Kevin couldn't avoid this collapse DR, but it was like a 10 or 11 and he passed easily. I staggered from the table in the small hours, collapsing into a dreamless sleep.

THE DERIVATION OF V

As I played Kevin, it struck me that it must be possible to develop a quantitative unit of speed of ASL play, called, naturally enough, the Valerian. For short, we can use V. On a scale of 1 to 10, Kevin would obviously play at a speed of 1V. Mark McGilchrist being the fastest player in the universe, would play at a speed of 10V i.e. ten times as fast, assuming a linear scale. Other players would fall in between: Seage 8-9V, myself 7-8V, Andrew Rogers 4V.

Is it possible to derive V as a numerical quantity rather than a qualitative unit? Based on experimental evidence, absolutely. We have one fixed data point – 45 minutes to move 6 AFV and 5 squads on foot. If we make the assumption cited by Tracy (1) that each AFV equals 1.5 squads in time required for movement, this gives us 14 squad-equivalents in 45 minutes. By simple division, therefore, we obtain the value

$$\text{One V} = 0.311 \text{ sq./min}$$

To convert to standard time units (the second) and using scientific expression

$$\text{V} = 5.185 \times 10^{-3} \text{ sq.s}^{-1}$$

(1) Tracy, J.R., *Playing for Time*, Critical Hit ASL Magazine Issue No. 3, 1995

I was too exhausted the next day to face another 8am start to a mini, so I went down later and got a pick-up game with Daniel Zucker. He only had limited equipment with him, so we played First to Strike, an old Deluxe scenario. After he had set up the Russians, I noticed that he had put the ATGs on the board unconcealed. I was going to point this out but then realised it probably wouldn't make much difference anyway. Despite losing the OBA first shot as the phone broke down, I was able to power my way to victory in three turns.

A hiatus then followed, as everyone seemed to be gaming madly, despite more people pouring in all the time. Late afternoon I was able to lock in with the famed Eddy Zeman. We got stuck into a game of Pomeranian Tigers. EZ was a competent and highly aggressive player, but aggression proved his undoing as his forward defence was cut off and then cut to pieces. He also mistakenly thought that he could out-trash-talk an Australian ASL player, but lost in that vein as well. At that point play ended for the day with two wins in the Grofaz tournament.

Friday came and with it another game, this time with a dude called Craig Hornish in Italian Brothers, a classic scenario. Craig had all his counters packed into tiny little pill containers that were extremely difficult to extract the counters from. The containers were packed into ASL game boxes two layers deep – now that's a system if I've ever seen one. It made a change from the normal Plano boxes absolutely stuffed with counters, but not one for the better. The game went smoothly as my Fascists seized control of all the buildings and Craig tossed it in. The tanks were used to surround the 6J8 building.

At this stage an old ASL legend turned up – Fish Conner! Not playing anymore, unfortunately – he's more or less given up on ASL – but dropping in on his way to a machine gun shoot in Kentucky. You know, the kind of thing where you can shoot MGs at old cars and 44 gallon drums on a field under controlled conditions, paying by the round (or clip for lighter weapons). Fish ambition this year was to fire the flamethrower – what a legend. He admitted the “Yeah, I think some militia groups use it as a kind of front and meeting place”.

Next crucial game was against the Chicago hitman, Bob Bendis. A great guy and a great gamer. We chose Ace In The Hole (one playing each) and I was the US. The going was real tough early but I managed to stage an amazing combined arms turnaround. Turn 5 lookin' bad, turn 6 all over red rover. At this stage the Aussie hopes in the Grofaz rested with me as both Paul and Steve had suffered defeats. At this point the MMP guys arrived bringing with them the new ASL modules!! They were wheeled in on a hotel luggage trolley with gamers clinging to the side and tearing madly at the boxes like wild squirrels tearing at a packet of nuts.

The crucial morning came, against “Alan Saltzmann, 82nd Airborne, retired”. We chose First and Inches, a quality PB product. Alan proved to be a highly superior player, and I was unable to seize enough early buildings against his skilful holding action. Then he swarmed in with the fresh troops and I fell about three points short in the end. My run was over. In the evening I had a friendly game of Stand at Festubert with Shelly Crawford, who came all the way from Florida only to be decimated in a total dog of a scenario. With Panzers running riot through the town cutting up the Bren carriers and infantry opposing them, Shelly had no option but to throw in the towel.

Sunday came and ASLOK was visibly winding down, with very few people left in the gaming areas but the championship games were still going. A last game with Klas Malmstrom from Sweden of Panzers to the Rescue. This one was short and sweet. Klas dashed forward with the tanks. My first three TK rolls with the 75's were 3, 3 and 5. Game over man! The evening was passed with Jim Cmelak and his mate Mike watching the Packers at the sports bar and drinking beer, as good a way as any to finish ASLOK – actually a better way than most. A breakfast with the dozen or so remnants the next morning and it was all over.

The attendance at ASLOK was a record 175 I think. General impressions this time around:

- The glass is now the preferred rolling method.
- Plano (usually overstuffed) is now the preferred storage method.
- Many of the names from four years ago were absent from the scene.
- Rivalries and personal feuds have arrived in ASL – sad but true. “Small minds in a small hobby”.

Following ASLOK, Steve jetted off to Chicago while Paul and I flew to New York. We were fortunate enough to be staying in the heart of Manhattan with friends of Pauls, and were thus able to enjoy the Big Apple from walking distance or an easy subway trip. The Met, the Staten Island ferry and many other attractions were enjoyed on the trip. One of the best things about NY is just walking around the place enjoying the bustle. ASL quotient – nil.

After this, Paul headed off to an unknown fate in the UK, while I flew south to Florida. I have to admit that the weather in the States caught me out badly. I went expecting coolish weather, but I needed a jacket about three times in Cleveland and NY, and Florida was shorts weather if I had bothered to take any. The place reminded me of the Gold Coast at the end of the season – great beaches too. They had just had a minor hurricane through the area and were still cleaning up. The space centre was a blast, full of interesting things and easily worth a full day and a half, I especially advise doing the historical tour. The second night was punctuated by the sound of running people outside the window and nearby sirens. I wandered out to get a can of pop from the vending machine, to be greeted by +2 smoke billowing across the grounds! One of the motel buildings (not the one I was in thankfully) had caught fire and flames were leaping out of the roof. The fire was quickly suppressed and next morning the damage was already being repaired.

Last stop was New Orleans. The place just goes off every night! It features the one street in the US where it is legal to drink on the street, and everybody does, with disposable cups of beer and various flavoured daiquiris being the beverages of choice. The place was full of bars, jazz and blues clubs, and touristy shops, perfect for any visitor to spend two or three days. A highly superior venue.

OctoBEAR:

An After-Action Report

By Neil Andrews

I am now finally getting around to constructing my little AAR of the 1999 Paddington Bears ASL tournament, Octobear 99. Held at the Paddington Bears headquarters in Sydney, Australia, over the 3rd and 4th of October. I won the award for the longest travelled as I had driven some 1000 kilometres to Sydney from Melbourne, in 2 days to attend. This was the only award I would win over the weekend. And all I got for that one was a hefty fuel bill (Oh! Well). It was sort of a DYO format. There were four scenarios created based on the events of Operation Bagration, better known to all and sundry as "The Destruction of Army Group Centre". Each scenario had a point total for both sides. Each side also has a list of "Platoons" which they can purchase with the points available, sort of like a campaign game (well sort of!).

The purchase list had certain limits and were based on historical availability. I will not go into the details of that, just suffice to say I bought everything I could within the availability limits. The forces involved were meant to represent the Soviet 5th Guard Army and for the Germans the Panzerdivision 6. Infantry platoons represent 5 squads, a vehicle platoon had 2 - 4 vehicles, and a section was one or two weapons and some manning infantry. Leaders had to be bought separately. There was one cute exception to this. Each player had a personal Leader. Each started off as a 8-0, and if they did something brave or achieved something. At the end of each turn the leader did something they rolled DR for him. If you got 2 or less then the leader was promoted. There were modifiers, like if you rallied a unit you got a -1, but if you helped take out a tank in CC, it was something like -7. This personal leader was officially used to break ties, etc. But usually a bit of fun for both sides. The numbers in () after each Platoon/section are how many units in each purchase

Scenarios were

- 1/ Breaking In
- 2/ Breakthrough
- 3/ Counterattack
- 4/ Liberation of Minsk

With each scenario we had been given a very brief description of what each scenario would involve, to give us a guide as to what forces would be a good buy. This was a very brief description as you will see later

Scenario 1 - Breaking In

Opponent - David Bishop

Result - Loss

Purchases

Rifle Platoon (5 458+ 1 LMG)

SMG Platoon (5 628+ 1 LMG)

9-2 Leader

8-1 Leader

8-0 Leader

SU 76 Platoon (4)

Battalion Mortar (82mm)

Plentiful Ammo

Boards 43.44

VC - Control buildings for VP

Well this one had been described as an attack against a lightly fortified position. A pillbox, 5 trenches, 6 wire and 30 mine factors to me does not describe a "lightly" fortified position. But I had to go with what we had. As the attacker I had been given as a freebee, a 120mm creeping barrage, so this would help. I even had a sort of a plan, which went something along the lines of use the OBA to smoke out the defenders, and the SU 76's would bombard from a distance, using their ROF to good advantage, whilst my Infantry would move up and tackle the defenders.

David purchased a platoon or 2 of Infantry and 2 75mm PaK 40 ATG's crewed by the devil himself.

One of these rotten things got rate twice in the first defensive fire bit, and then 5 (count them) times in the first prep phase. By that stage 3 of the SU's were burning and a couple of squads were toast too. At that stage I was already behind the 8 ball. My OBA smoke landed where I wanted (or at this time needed it), and I managed to move MR 9-2 and with some friends up toward the pillbox which was set up in the centre with a HMG.

Meanwhile on the flank with no ATG, my boys had managed a breakthrough of sorts. But he had some nicely placed boys in a trench that slowed the advance on that side to a crawl. My remaining SU could not hit the side of a barn from the inside. And the game petered out when the 9-2 tried to take a set of building in the centre, nicely covered by OBA smoke, and I had to rolled up Gusts. \$%\$^*. I still had to try and go for it, so I did. And that is how I found his minefields. We both misunderstood the personal leader rules, and thus did not roll enough times for either of them. But we both still had 8-0 leaders after this one

Scenario 2 - Breakthrough

Opponent - Adam Lunney

Result - Win

Purchases

Rifle Platoon (5 458+ 1 LMG)

SMG Platoon (5 628+ 1 LMG)

Lt Mortar Section (2x 50mm Mtrs 2x 248)

9-1 Leader

8-1 Leader

8-0 Leader

SU 122 Platoon (2)

Heavy Artillery I (152mm)

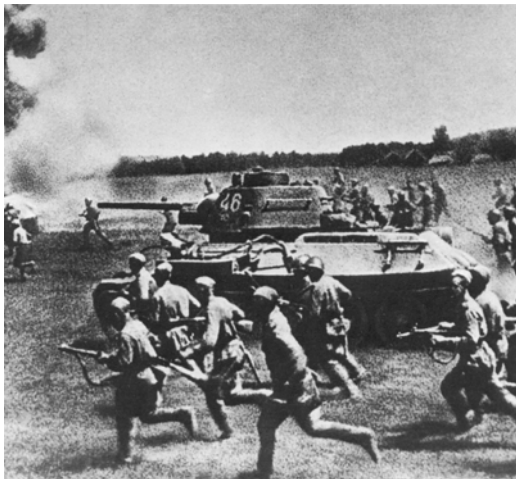
Plentiful Ammo

Boards 12.19.37

VC - Control Buildings for VP

Well, I had a plan for this one too. OBA to blow away defenders of the "Small Village defended by the Germans" (Scenario description). And the bigger SU's with there S depletion of 9 (we are Guards after all), to smoke up any remaining strongpoints. While the mortars suppress anything else. Infantry move up and assault the village. That was the plan..... When we got to see the board layout, and the SSR my plan was basically the same. We could enter from 3 sides, and we got a freebee in the form of a 44 FB with bombs for 1 turn. The bad guys got a 37mm FlaK truck to help out on their side.

Key events in this scenario included, picking out two nice spots to park the SU's on the first turn, Parking them there, and finding out that both of them were two hexes from a 50mm PaK 38 ATG. One on the north side and one on the west. Good one Neil !. Decided to smoke up the ATG's to save my butt, and both of the SU's rolled 10 (no smoke Argh!) and then were taken out by the ATG's, both rolling to kills of less than 4 (which is what they needed), Double good one Neil !. The in the battle of the OBA (Adam had 120mm stuff), I fluffed a perfectly placed attack by rolling 11 on the contact. His was accurate to the millimetre. OBA observer KIA (Argh!). But despite all of this my Infantry managed to storm the village with some help from the FB. The AA gun managed to Malf on the first roll at the FB (Whoopee!). There just were not enough defending infantry to go around. Both of us fluffed our personal leader rolls, mine was still an 8-0. Success. whoopee!!!



Scenario 3 - Counterattack

Opponent - Les Kramer

Result - Loss

Purchases

Rifle Platoon (5x 458 + 1x LMG)

9-1 Leader

.50-cal Section (1x .50-cal HMG = 1x 458)

HMG Section (1x HMG = 1x 458)

Heavy Tank Platoon (2x IS 2 Tanks)

9-2 Armour Leader

Fighter Bomber (2x 44 FB's with Bombs)

Boards 11.16.33

VC - Germans score CVP and exit VP, less the amount of Soviet CVP inflicted)

The plan. Hold up the German counter attack with the infantry and the armour until my trump card can arrive. I have to admire Les. He worked out the perfect defence in a scenario about a counter attack. Armour. What do I mean by that.. He only bought platoons of Tanks. 2 of PzKpfw IV's, 2 of Panthers and 1 of Tigers (I think I got that right). So it meant that my infantry had nothing to shoot at. He did get a freebee in this scenario, an SdKfz 232 AC. This I got with my best shot of the tournament. The .50-cal at 10 hexes range, through 4 hexes of grain, in the rear armour. My freebee was a useless BA 64B AC. My IS 2's managed to take out 6 vehicle's before they were both nailed, one by a CH with a Mk IV firing APCR.

But It was all over when my air support did a wonderful job of sitting on it's butt and refusing to come and help. I failed to roll low enough to get the air support, and thus Les could exit everything he had, with impunity. It is really hard to CC a bunch of tanks across open ground, without dying first. I had no tanks after turn 3. That was the end for me. But I tried. My leader was still an 8-0, at least he wasn't dead.

Scenario 4 - Liberation of Minsk

Opponent - Daniel Harrison

Result - Loss

Purchases

Assault Engineer Platoon (5x 628 Ass Eng 1x FT 2x DC)

SMG Platoon (5x 628 +LMG)

HMG Section (1x HMG = 1x 458)

MMG Section (2x MMG = 2x 458)

10-3 Leader

10-2 Leader

SU 152 Platoon (2)

9-1 Armour Leader

Boards 21.45

VC - Germans score CVP and exit VP, less the amount of Soviet CVP inflicted)

This scenario a straight up city fight. Due to the fact that time was growing short, and people were taking too long to play scenario one. The tournament organiser decided to

take off one turn of a 5 1/2 turn game, away. This made the job very difficult for the attacker. Yes I know it penalised everybody the same. But It meant that everybody had to take inordinate risks to get up to the action, because even though the game was shortened, the distance that had to be covered was not changed. If those who got away with risky moves or poor defence, were a shoe in for a win. Plan this time - Attack. When I had seen the boards and Setup. I had decided to use a bit of a screening force on one side, and assault on the other. I decided to give my Personal leader his best chance of promotion by giving him the FT to play with. The 10-3 was stacked with 3 squads, 2 LMG's and a DC, and the 10-2 was stacked with another 3 squads and the MMG's and the HMG. Yes I know, don't stack. But with 4 and a 1/2 turns to cover a board length ways I needed to stack with leaders to even get close to the buildings I needed to capture (Basically Buildings from row R to A) on both boards. I started out at Row X.

Things went wrong from the start. Daniel had 3 platoons of infantry as defenders (and some ATG's but I never even found them). He had also been given 2 set DC's. Whilst I had an OT 34 starting on turn 3. The 10-2 and his friends, moved up as quick as they could. Straight into the hex with a set DC. All KIA'ed. I personally do not think that I would have taken such a risk if I had more time. Oh Well!, Spilt milk (or KIA'ed counters). The rest of the boys moved up and very slowly pushed back the defenders. The die rolling began to go my way at this point. I began to pass moral checks, and shots I took actually began to break the bad guys. A 10-3 leader is really a nice thing to have. The OT 34 managed to flame some of the Germans. A Schrek shot at it missed, and the firer then got toasted.

My personal leader managed to run around a lot and fry some more Germans with his FT. and you guessed it, He got promoted to an 8-1, hooray! He was one of 2 personal leaders who got promoted and survived, the other was David Bishop's. His got promoted in scenario 3. But I ran out of time. I managed to capture some of the buildings, but compared to a couple of others, they got more. But then again they managed to avoid the Set DC's, or in one case the DC malfed. I know I sound like a whinger. But I think that another turn would have brought victory without the risks.

Conclusions to be drawn from this. :

- Dont fail Moral checks (obvious)
- If you play in this style of tournament. Don't rely on things that you might get. Only buy tangible things that can shoot back all the time. Not stuff like OBA or FB's. Out of a total of some 400 pts available, I wasted some 65 on things that never arrived, a damn big percentage.
- Don't Argue. At one stage I got rattled. this is not something that any one should do at the best of time. I did and It is not something I am proud of. And I apologise to the person I did it with. No names, no Pack drill. He knows who is . I apologised at the time, But it is not a way to make a good impression. And it's not the way to win. I remember someone saying once why one particular person wins all the time, one of the reasons is that he never got flustered. I did.

Well it may sound like I did not have a good time, and that would be wrong. I had a ball, and I learnt a lot, and that is what it is all about. I would like to thank all those involved. Richard Cornwell for organising the whole thing, Paul Haseler for helping me organising some accommodation. And for Alan Smee for providing it, and being a gracious host, with his Girlfriend, Robin. And thanks to all the Bears for providing some challenging opponents and conversation whilst we were at it.

PS

I managed to play 2 pick up games over the whole weekend. One was PP 6 Under a Sky of Lead. played against Alan Smee. A bit each Morning. And to add a bit to the discussion re what to do with the at start forces. Use them to try and slow down the Germans. I didn't and I paid for it. The other was Wintergewitter. I was the Germans Vs Mark McGilchrist's Soviets. Played it on Sunday night after the tournament concluded. Highlight was an immobilised (in the right spot) Mk IV getting 5 rates including a CH with the final one (there was nothing else in LOS) on the final T 34. Burner. It came down to the last CC phase. And I managed to win or tie up all of those to scrape out a win. good scenario, that one. Thank you all of those in Sydney for your time and effort in making it a fantastic weekend. I might not have gone too well overall, but still had a great time. See if I can do a bit better at CanCon

The Australian Army Order of Battle

2nd AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE

With the declaration of war against Germany on 3 September 1939, consideration was again given to an expeditionary force for service overseas, based on a mobilisation scheme, Plan 401, initially drawn up in 1922. The new brigades and divisions were to be numbered sequentially as in 1914, and as the militia disposed of five divisions and 15 brigades, the new AIF formation was designated the 6th Division, and its brigades the 16th, 17th & 18th. Battalions, however, used the original numbers with a '2nd' prefix, for example, 2/1st Battalion. The 16th Brigade recruited in New South Wales, the 17th in Victoria, while the 18th drew units from Queensland (2/9th), South Australia (2/10th), Western Australia (2/11th) and Tasmania (2/12th).

Throughout 1940 the 7th, 8th & 9th Divisions were raised, but the intention of maintaining the neat symmetry of the original AIF organisation broke down and the result was an organisational mess. The first of the major changes came about through a British decision to reduce brigades from four battalions to three. The 18th Brigade had been diverted to England in June 1940, and the 6th Division was completed by combining the 2/4th and 2/8th Battalions, now surplus to establishment, with the 2/11th, which had arrived in Egypt ahead of the rest of the 18th Brigade, to form a new brigade, the 19th. This decision, together with the needs of divisions committed to action, set of a train of organisational movement which lasted over a year.

The 7th Division was made up with the addition of a new brigade, the 26th, which consisted of the 2/23rd, 2/24th and 2/48th Battalions, and which joined the 20th and 21st Brigades.

The 8th Division, which was to be lost at the fall of Singapore in February 1942, consisted originally of the 22nd, 23rd and 24th Brigades, but never took the field as a complete division because the battalions of the 23rd Brigade were spread thinly across Ambon, Timor and Rabaul, where they were quickly overwhelmed in the first Japanese attacks.

The 9th Division was formed from those forces diverted to Britain and formed into the 25th Brigade, together with the 24th Brigade, which was transferred from the 8th Division and replaced by a new 27th Brigade, and the 20th Brigade, which was transferred from the 7th Division and replaced in that formation by the 18th Brigade. After the final reorganisation following the first Libyan campaign, the four divisions then overseas were organised as follows: 6th Division (16th, 17th, 19th Brigades); 7th Division (18th, 21st, 25th Brigades); 8th Division (22nd,

23rd, 27th Brigades); 9th Division (20th, 24th, 26th Brigades).

As a result of the lessons of the early campaigns in Europe, the decision was taken to raise an armoured division in Australia at the beginning of 1941, and the 1st Armoured Division joined the AIF order of battle, although by the beginning of 1942 it was still well under strength, lacked much of its equipment, and was destined never to serve outside Australia as a formation.

The organisation of the 2nd AIF was complicated further by the decision that any militia unit in which three-quarters of the men volunteered to serve anywhere outside Australian territory became an AIF unit. By February 1943, 530,000 men out of a total of 820,000 were volunteers of this kind, and during the course of the war about 200,000 men transferred from the CMF to the AIF. The result was that the army now consisted of units that had been raised as part of the 2nd AIF, units that had been militia but had been given AIF status, and units that remained militia ones and hence could not serve outside a clearly circumscribed geographical area. The 'two armies policy' was unwise at a number of levels, and gave rise to considerable animosity between men on both sides. Early volunteers for the 2nd AIF had been dubbed 'five-bob-a-day murderers' and 'economic conscripts'; they got their own back by designating the militia 'chocos', short for chocolate soldiers, or 'koalas' ('not to be exported or shot').

By 1943, after the heroic performance of some Militia battalions in the Papuan campaign, much of this animosity had dissipated and the common focus of animosity was the better paid Americans.

MILITIA

Militia units were deployed to Papua in combat against the Japanese and, after mid-1943 and the extension of the area to which compulsory enlisted soldiers might be deployed, to New Guinea, and in the course of the war three militia formations served overseas, the 3rd, 5th & 11th Divisions. The extension of the area to which militiamen might be deployed had been a source of friction both between the CMF and AIF, and within the higher defence machinery. There was a strong feeling within some sections of the government and high command that Australia's position in Allied councils was weakened in circumstances where American conscripts could be sent to die in defence of Australia while Australian conscripts could not. The CMF produced some of the ablest commanders in the Australian Army, Dougherty, Chilton and Eather in particular, and in the course of the war a quarter of a million men served in the

CMF, not including the 200,000 who voluntarily transferred to the AIF.



INFANTRY BATTALIONS

During the Second World War the infantry battalion had evolved from its World War I predecessor, partly in recognition of the changes in the nature of combat wrought by advancing technology. A battalion now comprised 21 officers and 752 men organised into three rifle companies of four platoons of three sections each, a support company of three machine-gun and one 3-inch mortar platoon, and a headquarters wing with signals, transport, intelligence, quartermaster and administrative staff. The early battalions of the 6th Division were raised in this manner, but as in 1914 the basic infantry organisation was changed soon after the outbreak of war, and the subsequent AIF divisions were raised on this basis from the start while the 6th Division's units were converted.

There were now 35 officers in a battalion (not counting the Salvation Army representative), and the battalion comprised four rifle companies of three platoons of three sections each and a head quarters company with six platoons (signals, mortar, carrier, pioneer, anti-aircraft, and transport and administrative). Machine-guns were controlled at the divisional level while an anti-tank company was formed for each brigade of the 6th Division during the First Libyan campaign when the division's anti-tank regiment was diverted to Britain. Both the strength and internal organisation of infantry battalions changed constantly throughout the war, making further generalisation difficult. Following British practice, brigades now consisted of three rather than four battalions, and as in the previous war there were specialist machine-gun and pioneer battalions, and anti-tank regiments (although these had little application in the Pacific), together with independent companies and special units which did some infantry work.



In the 2nd AIF there were 36 battalions, but with the militia units mobilised for the defence of Australia and operations in New Guinea together with the Papuan Infantry Battalions and New Guinea Volunteer Rifles the army had raised more than 100 battalions of infantry by the middle years of the war.

BATTALION ESTABLISHMENT



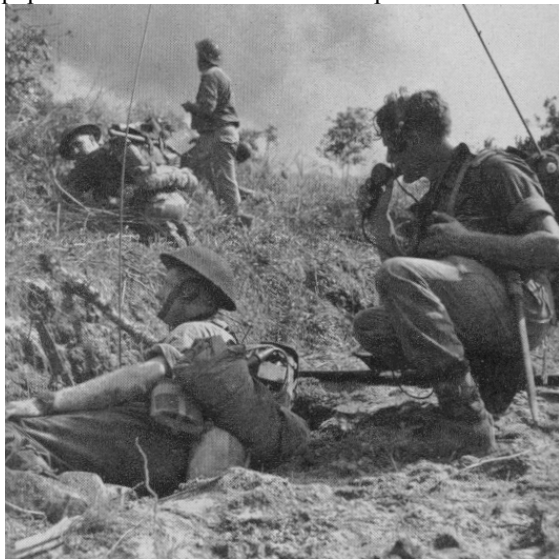
Headquarter Company: Is the specialist Platoon Company and has an Officer Commanding (O.C.) and no second-in-command; The Senior Non-Commissioned-Officer of the Company, the Company Sergeant Major (C.S.M.) is a Warrant Officer Class 2. The Quartermaster Sergeant (C.Q.M.S.) is a Staff-Sgt.; One Orderly Room Sgt.; One Orderly Room Cpl., both carrying out all pay and administrative details of the company and Battalion HQ personnel; Battalion rangetaker, one technical storeman and one general storeman.

The Company Commander is responsible to the Battalion Commanding Officer for the training and disposition of the specialist platoons, but each specialist platoon is directly under the command of the C.O. in all operational matters and each specialist platoon O.C. has a direct approach to the C.O. in the field. The Company comprises the following platoons:-



No. 1 Platoon - Signals: Has an Officer commanding (O.C.) who is responsible for the whole of the signal communication establishment and maintenance within the battalion in and out of the field, by line, wireless and visual signalling means. He has one Signal Sergeant, two Signal Corporals and thirty signalmen, with three motor

cycle despatch riders (DRs) and they are all group specialists with extra pay. The platoon is divided into Wireless and Line sections, and all are trained to be interchangeable and to carry out visual signalling in addition, if required, and circumstances demand. Wireless is used back to Brigade and forward to Rifle Companies. Attached to the Signal Platoon when required, can be a Wireless section of the Divisional Signals, for more powerful signals over longer ranges to the rear areas back to Bde. and Divisional HQ. The operational distances within the Battalion for the Battalion 108 sets is a maximum of 3 miles under good conditions. The Line sections laid and maintained telephone lines in static positions to the Brigade HQ in the rear and to all forward Rifle Companies, and where required and the situation demanded to Platoons and sections. Visual signalling equipments were issued to Rifle Companies for use



where required.

In order to maintain an efficient signalling system throughout an Infantry Battalion it was always necessary to improvise civilian and additional equipments obtained from various sources, for the normal issue as laid down of 8 telephones and 8 miles of cable was not at any time sufficient to provide more than a bare skeleton of communication.



No. 2 Platoon - Anti-Aircraft Platoon: Has an Officer Commanding (O.C.) who is responsible for the setting up

and maintenance of the A/A defence of the Battalion HQ and Echelon areas; of the Battalion motor transport moves whilst in action; the protection of supply columns moving from Echelons to Battalion HQ and through to forward companies; also to be trained for night perimeter defence duties and/or Battalion patrol duties. Normally one section would be forward with the Btn HQ and the other with the motor transport echelons. The two sections each of two light machine guns, each of three men with one Sergeant and two Corporals. Guns capable of being fired from static ground mountings or on the 15 cwt. truck mounting whilst on the move. The platoon has two motor cycle orderlies and a strength of 17 all ranks.



No. 3 Platoon - Mortar Platoon: The Commanding Officer's immediate close support guns consisting of three sections each of two 3" mortars (Malayan establishment); each 3" mortar named as a detachment. It fired a 10 lb. bomb with a range of 1100 yards and was designed for defiladed targets, that is behind reverse slopes or in gullies. With its ultra high trajectory, the bomb could reach into positions no low trajectory shell used by the artillery could ever reach. The 3" mortar was an invaluable close support weapon. The platoon was commanded by a Captain with a junior officer as second in command. There were five Sergeants (one Pl. Sgt. and four detachment Sgts.) four detachment corporals, a range taker, a motor cycle orderly and 24 mortar numbers.



No. 4 Platoon - Carrier Platoon: Probably the C.O.s most effective and flexible fire power unit. Consisting of four sections each of three carriers and the Platoon Commander's Carrier. The Pl. Commander was a Captain with a Lieut. as 2nd in Command. Thirteen vehicles armoured against small arms fire and shell splinters at the C.O.'s disposal for movement to supply fire power wherever required at short notice, and to replenish ammunition or evacuate personnel under fire, and all in all a most versatile vehicle which could move at an average of 30 miles per hour and being a tracked unit could move across country fairly easily. Each carrier had a Vickers medium machine gun mounted for forward firing and a light automatic machine gun, (in the early stages a Lewis gun, and then Brens when they became available). in addition, each section had a Boyes anti-tank rifle per section. Operated by a crew of three including driver, each carrier could operate for 2 to 4 hours before fuel replenishment and carried 1000 rds 303 SAA. There were four Sgts., four Corporals, and twelve privates, thirteen driver mechanics, and two motor cycle orderlies. The platoon tactics of supplying mobile screens and scouting patrols, and its ability to move its guns and men across bullet swept ground, with a very good supply of its own ammunition at hand, was a great advantage to any Battalion Commander. The value in-country was immense, but in underdeveloped country, rocky, heavily timbered or jungle country, movement could be restricted.



No. 5 Platoon - Pioneer Platoon: its primary role was to carry out minor engineering tasks within the Battalion. It was trained as a Battalion HQ protective Platoon and was armed the same as an Infantry Platoon and trained to fulfil the same infantry functions, but the primary training was in all matters engineering. it was used for the building, repair, maintenance of internal roads and tracks, erection of kitchens, ablution blocks, water points, Bn HQ and Coy. HQ shelters and dugouts, for the making of harbours, bridges, drains and culverts, septic and drainage facilities, and it was trained in demolitions, booby traps, and all mine and booby trap clearances, the laying of minefields for anti-personnel, anti-tank and underwater approaches, and tank trap constructions. It was responsible for the Bn HQ patrols and carried a variety of 1 explosives, and construction equipments. The members of the platoon were tradesmen, such as carpenters, masons, bricklayers, blacksmiths, metal workers, and were all versed and trained in explosives. The Platoon was commanded by a Lieutenant, with one sergeant and two corporals, and 18 other ranks. They were all specialists on higher group pay.



No. 6 Platoon - Transport Platoon: The largest platoon in the Battalion on paper, but as most of the vehicles were permanently detached to Battalion HQ, and the various companies, the main duty was the supply and repair and maintenance of the 74 vehicles of the Battalion, except the Carriers. The transport vehicles were divided into echelons. The "F" or fighting Echelon, consisted of vehicles for the "fray", the carriers, mortar vehicles, signal trucks, anti-aircraft vehicles with the forward echelon, Rifle Platoon and Rifle Coy HQ trucks with reserve ammunition and stores, Pioneer Pl. truck with immediate stores, Battalion HQ office truck and Bde Signals truck. These "F" echelon trucks were generally 15 cwt. capacity except the Battalion HQ and Bde Signals truck which were 30 cwt. These trucks accompanied the Battalion action, although out of the forward company areas and were generally kept in and Battalion HQ. (There were no fixed rules on this, and they were up forward or at Bn as the situation decreed or as required, but in any case they were within easy reach).

The "A" Echelon vehicles consisted of the fighting support vehicles, the Platoon and rifle company stores trucks, which carried tools, picks, shovels, wire, mines stores, and packs and greatcoats. These "A" Echelon vehicles usually came up as the situation required and returned to rear areas after dropping 'loads. The balance of vehicles was known as the "B" Echelon group and generally under the control of the Transport Officer. This Echelon comprised the Quartermaster and his personnel and attached Ordnance and R.A.E.M.E. personnel, such as bootmakers, armourer, etc. The trucks were 30 cwt. and 3 tonners and carried the fuel supplies, rations, and stores, the battalion stores and reserves, the Company kitchen groups, the Battalion reserve wire, mines, ammunition, etc.

The "B" Echelon vehicles were in many cases brigaded with other Battalions but every situation and circumstance could vary. It generally the practice for meals to be prepared and cooked in the "B" Echelon area taken forward to the respective companies and attached troops in hot boxes, generally at night. This was the theory of the division of the vehicles but in practice the vehicles forward were those which were absolutely essential in the action and those were the support vehicles, and these support vehicles could be split to close near or at the rear of Battalion HQ, or way back at the B Echelon area. The total strength of the HQ Company was 227.

The four Rifle companies designated "A", "B", "C", "D", each comprised the Company Officer, the Officer Second-in-Command (2 i/c), Company Sergeant Major (CSM), W.O.11 Pay and Room Corporal (usually a Lance Sgt.), Company Quartermaster Sergeant (CQMS), a storeman and a batman-driver. There were three platoons each with a Platoon HQ consisting of a Platoon Commander (usually a Lieutenant), a Platoon Sergeant and two other ranks. The Boyes 50 lb. solid shot anti-tank rifle was carried with Platoon HQ and 10 rounds were carried by the 2 O/Rs apart from their runner duties. This Boyes rifle could penetrate side armour of light and medium tanks. The Pltn. HQ also had two 2" mortar men who carried 12 x 2 lb. bombs - 8 high explosive and 4 smoke. This 2" mortar was an invaluable short range weapon for the immediate close support use by the Pltn. Commander, range of up to 500 yds., with a high trajectory.

In each rifle platoon there were three sections, each comprising a Section Cpl. and 10 infantrymen. Section Commanders carried a Thompson or Owen sub-machine gun and with the section commander was a Bren light machine gun team, the gunner carrying the gun and his No. 2 carrying the magazines. Four of the eight riflemen



in each section carried 50 rounds of 303 SAA and four Bren magazines, and the other four riflemen in each section carried 100 rounds and no mags. Each member of all rifle companies carried 2, four second grenades.

In effect the Infantry Battalion consisted of 5 companies, one being the specialist and personnel, and four were rifle companies, each of 9 sections or 36 fighting sections in all, all organised similarly, and upon which you had superimposed 12 platoon leaders with a HQ and four company commanders with a HQ. Each of the rifle companies had an establishment of 130 all ranks, so in fact you had 520 men as the components of the Battalion.

INFANTRY COMPANIES

In general, all Infantry Battalions had the same structure, with the companies being names A to E within each Battalion (not A-D, E-H, I-L etc.). Platoons were numbered sequentially through the Battalion, so that A Company had Platoons 7, 8 & 9
B Company had Platoons 10, 11 & 12
C Company had Platoons 13, 14 & 15
D Company had Platoons 16, 17 & 18
HQ (or E) Company had Platoons 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6

MACHINE GUN BATTALIONS

In 1937 four regiments of light horse on the CMF order of battle were converted to machine gun regiments and motorised. In large part these were units which found it difficult to maintain numbers of horses because of the motorisation of civilian transport. They were equipped with Vickers guns and a variety of trucks and vehicles. Three additional machine gun regiments were raised from light horse units during the war as part of the conversion of the cavalry divisions to motor divisions.



In the 2nd AIF four new machine gun battalions were raised for service with the four divisions. Because the 2/1st Machine Gun Battalion was in the convoy with the 18th Brigade which was diverted to England in 1940, the 6th Division entered its first campaign, in Libya in January the following year, supported by the 1st Battalion of the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, a British regular army machine gun battalion which also supported the 9th Division in Tobruk. Additional battalions saw service in the south-west Pacific, the 7th in Papua and the 6th in New Guinea.

PIONEER BATTALIONS

Pioneer battalions performed construction tasks in the forward area not requiring the special equipment of engineers, such as constructing trenches and dugouts although they occasionally acted in the engineer role on tasks such as the construction of bridges. They had a large proportion of tradesmen and were organised the same as infantry battalions. In a pinch they could and did serve as infantry in the front line.

ARTILLERY

The 2nd AIF sailed to the Middle East with 18-pounder and 4.5 inch howitzer batteries, and although these guns performed useful service in the early campaigns against the Italians in the Western Desert, they were of no use against the better equipped Germans. Indeed, even during the first Libyan campaign, Australian units had 'salvaged' captured Italian guns, and during the siege of Tobruk in 1941 these formed the 'bush artillery'.



By 1942 the Australians finally began to be re-equipped with the new British 25-pounder guns, the most versatile field gun of the war. Anti-tank guns, however, continued to be a problem. The Australian troops found the standard 2-pounder just as inadequate against medium armour as their British counterparts. The war in the desert provided the best opportunity for the use of artillery in support of Australian operations in the Second World War, culminating at Alamein where the massive British and Commonwealth superiority in artillery was the crucial factor in the crumbling and eventual destruction of the Afrika Korps.

Artillery was of less use in jungle warfare. The terrain was difficult, the targets were often not obvious, and the opportunity for the large-scale deployment of guns limited. Light pack-guns, including a version of the 25-pounder (the 'baby' 25), were, however, used to some effect, as was the 3.7-inch pack howitzer. Occasionally the guns could be decisive, as they were at Lababia Ridge and Mount Tambu in New Guinea in 1943 and in some of the Bougainville operations in 1944.

ARMOUR

At the outbreak of war Australian units sent to the Middle East in 1940 were quite unprepared for armoured warfare. The only formation with any claim to be armoured was the 6th Divisional Cavalry Regiment, one squadron was equipped with armoured machine-gun carriers and operated in a reconnaissance role. The victory of the Germans in western Europe had revived interest in tanks in Australia. A decision was made to raise an armoured division as part of the 2nd AIF and to set up an Armoured Fighting Vehicle (AFV) School to train personnel for the division. The AFV School was located at Puckapunyal, Victoria, in 1941. Major-General John Nordicott was placed in command of the embryo division which was formed by mechanising light horse units.

The first priority was to equip the new formation with tanks, the 11 Mark VIs being the only mobile tanks in the country. Orders were immediately placed in Britain and the United States and a decision taken to design and manufacture the Sentinel tank in Australia. Thirteen M3 light tanks arrived in September 1941, and were soon followed by 400 more, while 140 British Matildas began arriving in July 1942. By December there were no less than 1450 tanks in the country, the majority being Matildas and light and medium M3s. Other types were to arrive in Australia during the war and various types of armoured cars and scout cars were also used.

Meanwhile the training of the 1st Australian Armoured Division was proceeding under a new GOC, Major-General H. C. H. Robertson. Manoeuvres were held and training courses attended, although the equipping of the division took much longer. With the rapid Japanese advance and the threat to Papua New Guinea, however, it became increasingly obvious that the exigencies of the situation and the nature of the territory under threat meant that 1st Armoured Division would be unlikely to fight as a formation. This is indeed what occurred. The 1st Armoured Division was broken up in September 1943, but small groups of regular officers were sent to the Mediterranean theatre to acquire armoured warfare experience with the British Army.

During the course of 1942-43, Australia attempted to raise three armoured divisions, which proved to be well

beyond the nation's capabilities. Cavalry units were sent to Papua and other areas as required, with M3 tanks in operation at Buna in 1942, Matildas in the Huon Campaign in 1943 and at Wewak and Bougainville in 1944 and 1945. The final Australian tank operations of the war took place in Borneo in 1945. In general the Matilda had proved the most successful tank for jungle fighting. It was manoeuvrable in close country and its 2-pounder gun was useful in destroying Japanese concreted bunkers. During the occupation of Japan after the war the 1st Australian Armoured Car Squadron provided a light armoured capability for the British Commonwealth Occupation Force.

INDEPENDENT COMPANIES

Following the decision of the British Army in the latter part of 1940 to form commando units to carry out raids and guerrilla operations in German-occupied Europe, a British training team known as Military Mission 104 was sent to Australia to set up similar units in the AIF. The Australian units became known as Independent Companies, because of their ability to fight independently of other units. Military Mission 104, commanded by Colonel C. Mawhood, who had served with the AIF during the First World War, arrived in December 1940, and established No. 7 Infantry Training School at Wilson's Promontory, Victoria, in February 1941. The school's first commander was Major William Scott and the 2/1st Independent Company was formed after eight weeks training in June 1941. Independent Companies were in fact not Commandos in the currently understood term of the word (raiders from the sea etc.), but rather a small military unit capable of self support in the field to conduct guerrilla actions.

An Independent Company was commanded by a major, with a captain as second-in-command and another captain as medical officer. There were three platoons, each of 67

men, each platoon commanded by a captain, and each platoon was divided into three sections, each commanded by a lieutenant. In addition to the infantry platoons, each company also had its own engineer and signals sections commanded by lieutenants. An Independent Company therefore consisted of 273 other ranks and 17 officers, which was a higher ratio of officers to men than in a normal infantry company. When the threat of war with Japan became greater July 1941, the 2/1st Independent Company was scattered in outposts (where many would be taken prisoner) in the New Hebrides (Vanuatu), the Solomon Islands, New Ireland and Manus Island, while the 2/3rd went to New Caledonia.

When war broke out the 2/2nd was sent to Timor, where following the Japanese occupation of the island, they retreated to the interior and carried out guerrilla operations for almost a year. After the Japanese landed at Lae and Salamua in New Guinea in March 1942, they were harried by the 2/5th Independent Company, which formed part of Kanga Force. Independent Companies were used throughout the New Guinea campaigns for patrols ahead of the main forces.

In October 1942, the 2/7th Australian Cavalry Regiment, which had been the 7th Division's armoured unit, was made the administrative headquarters for Independent Companies and they were renamed Cavalry (Commando) Squadrons (this was later simplified to Commando Squadrons). This change was resented by men of the units, for whom, in the words of one soldier, the word 'commando' conjured up images of 'a blatant, dirty, unshaven, loud-mouthed fellow covered with knives and knuckle-dusters'. When the cavalry regiments of the 6th and 9th Divisions were disbanded in January 1944, they too were re-formed as four Commando Squadrons. Commando Squadrons were serving in Bougainville, New Guinea and Borneo when the war ended.

The civilians who joined up 1939-1945

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In recent books and journals, considerable interest has been shown in the calibre of recruits for the various services, most notably in the U.S. Armed Forces, but also in the German armed Forces and British Armed Services. This article, published in the Journal of the Australian War Museum, Issue 29 (November 1996). The journal article is available online at <http://www.awm.gov.au/journal/j29/civils.htm>, but I have extracted (probably quite illegally) the gist of the article to give an insight into the type of recruit trained in different services by the Australian Army (1939-1945). Read in conjunction with Stephen Ambrose's "Citizen Soldiers" it gives a stereotype of the Australian recruit that can be compared to the stereotypical American recruit.

The comparison is not necessarily an accurate one, since the role of the two armies is significantly different. The Australian Army always fought as an ally of a major power, initially Great Britain, and then from 1942 onwards, primarily the United States. As such, the frontline combat role is far more predominant than the logistic and support "tail" that the major power provided. Therefore, a far greater percentage of Australian recruits served as "frontline troops" compared to the British and U.S. Forces. The nearest comparison is the Australian Army of 1944-45, where the Australian Army was predominant in the South-West Pacific Theatre, although far from self-sufficient. The logistical "tail" of the Army then grew comparatively large, with 40% or less troops serving on the frontlines.



We may never have a completely satisfactory portrait of the 'typical' Australian recruit of World War II, but the more we know of the men who became soldiers, the better we can understand their behaviour in war. The civilian backgrounds of the men who joined the army have received little systematic attention, and the object of this article is to offer new evidence which starts to fill in several of the existing gaps: especially in our knowledge of the civilian occupations, age, height, education, measured intellectual ability and motives of the men who joined the Australian army between 1939 and 1945. The purpose is to conclude by offering a tentative image of the 'typical' recruit.

Australians who joined the army in World War II were generally young, though not perhaps as young as one might have expected. The age limits set for enlistment in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in 1939 were 20 to 35 for recruits, higher for officers and some NCOs. (The AIF was composed of men who had volunteered for overseas service). In 1914 the corresponding limits had been 18 to 45. The 2nd AIF maximum was raised to 40 in 1940, and the minimum lowered to 19 in 1941, and 18 in 1943; written parental consent was required for anyone under the age of 21. Even when the limit was lowered to 18, men of that age were not permitted to go to New Guinea or the Northern Territory.

From 1942, the CMF also shared with the AIF a requirement that all recruits under the age of 20 on enlistment undergo six months training before being posted to a unit. The CMF upper limit was 60, but, by February 1944, 96.4 per cent of those conscripted had been 18-35, and the final percentage would have been higher. There were numerous cases of age limits being flouted in front-line units. It is surely no coincidence that among the men enlisted in the AIF by July 1941, single men supposedly just within the minimum and maximum age limits were the most over-represented age groups in the Force

Some 69 per cent of volunteers had been single on enlistment. Well over half were in their twenties in 1941, and nearly one-third were aged 20 to 25. The average age of this group, and of the 1942-3 sample, was approximately 29. The average age of the first division recruited, the 6th Division, was higher than expected, and these figures suggest that the trend continued for some time after 1939.

During the last 18 months of the war, however, the average age almost certainly dropped. During that time, 85-90 per cent of all conscripts were 18 on enlistment. Many of these would not have reached the front before the war ended, but those who did would have lowered the average. Similarly, the youth of reinforcements to AIF units in the last year of the war is often noted. Many 19-year-olds fought in New Guinea, Borneo and Bougainville in 1945, and still younger soldiers had been prominent in the fighting on the Kokoda Trail, some three years earlier, for numerous 18- and 19-year-olds were in the CMF battalions which participated in that campaign. This illegal situation was not tolerated for long, but Australians at the front were almost certainly somewhat younger than the army average. The oldest men were generally not in fighting units, and those responsible for allocating recruits probably recognized that younger men, being the keenest and fittest available, were the best suited to front-line soldiering.

A recruit might conceal his age, but not his height. In 1939 the AIF minimum was 5 feet 6 inches (167.6 cm); a year later 5 feet (152 cm) was enough. The patchy figures available suggest an average of about 5 feet 7.7 inches (172 cm), slightly shorter than the American average of 5ft 8.4in (173.7 cm). The height of Australian front-line soldiers was still sufficient to be remarkable in comparisons with Italian, Japanese, Greek and British soldiers, and to give rise to foreign publicity about 'Laughing giants from Down Under'.



The mental capacities of recruits are far harder to measure, but the army psychologists who assisted in recruitment from 1942 had to try to assess men's aptitude for the various army branches. In this they relied mainly on mental tests, notably an Otis-type intelligence test. The results of such testing need to be treated with caution, but are interesting for their evidence of the army's attitudes towards its men and towards its various branches. A compilation of results of the intelligence testing suggest that, from 1942, the median 'mental calibre' of the army

population was 20 per cent lower than that of the Australian adult male population. As Table 3 shows, the average recruit in several army branches created for front-line service, and indeed for the 'Arms' in general, was above the army median as measured by this test.

Table 3: Psychological assessments of intellectual capacity of recruits: Proportion above median for the army standard recruit population (%)

Civil adult male population	72
Recruits (standard recruit population)	51
Recruits allocated to arms	72
Signals	91
Armoured and cavalry	75
Machine guns	72
Artillery	71
Infantry	65

While the intelligence of the average signals recruit was assessed as above the civilian median, in several other combat arms there was little or no variation from that mark, and in the main combat arm, infantry, the intelligence of the average recruit was measured as some 7 per cent below the civilian level. This tendency in infantry recruitment was attributed by an authority to the 'heavy drainage' of specialists to technical units, and it mirrored the experience of the British and American infantry.

It should be noted that psychological assessment was introduced only in 1942. Although this meant that potential recruits who were psychologically unsuited for service were more likely to be accepted earlier in the war, there was later general agreement amongst the psychological assessors that in terms of 'mental calibre' the 'quality' of the pre-1942 recruits had been higher. Certainly the assessors measured a sharp downturn in recruit quality from 1942 to 1944. In 1943-4, 27 per cent of all recruits were from what the Army's Director of Psychology called 'the bottom 8 per cent of the population.'

Of all the services, the air force had the strongest public appeal, and it won a disproportionate share of those assessed as intellectually 'superior'. Moreover, until 1943 the air force and navy, both of which depended on voluntary enlistment, had lower minimum recruiting ages than the AIF, and this attracted many eager young recruits who were unwilling to wait to join the AIF or risk the stigma of conscription. Together with strict occupational limitations, which were chiefly responsible for keeping up to half a million potential recruits from the services, these factors tended to discourage recruitment of the more highly skilled, particularly for compulsory service. The downward trend in the quality of army recruits was arrested only after the introduction of more stringent intellectual requirements in 1944 and various curtailments in recruiting for the munitions industries and RAAF in 1945.

Australian army recruits were generally not highly educated: men assessed as requiring attention because they were 'educationally backward' were probably more common than those who had completed a full secondary course, and illiterates were two to three times more prevalent than the university educated. The 1942-3 census found that approximately half the men in the Army had left school at age 14, two-thirds at or before that age. Only 7 per cent had completed a full secondary course, and 1.4 per cent a degree or diploma.

The overwhelming majority of Australian soldiers who served in World War II were 'substantially of European origin or descent'. This was inevitable, given the ethnic composition of Australia's population and the relevant provisions of the Defence Act. That legislation excluded 'full-blooded' Aborigines from enlistment. Some men of part-Aboriginal descent who were not legally entitled to join the AIF were accepted early in the war, and successive governments referred to the eligibility of 'the better type of half-caste'. However, on the advice of commanding officers, the Defence Act provisions were strictly applied from mid-1940. At that time, the Director-General of Medical Services, whose branch had discretion in individual cases, stated that: 'In general the enlistment of half-caste aboriginals is not advisable. The files of the Australian Archives document pathetic cases of hopeful men rejected: including four men of part-Aboriginal descent who, after initial acceptance, saw 'Aboriginal - reject' marked on their papers; and two young men of similar background whose efforts to follow their father (a POW at the time) into the AIF were repeatedly thwarted by their classification as 'essentially of abo blood'.

Every recruit was asked about his civilian occupation. Two detailed censuses, taken in 1941 and 1943, offer evidence on the peacetime employment of recruits. Table 4 reproduces a summary of 'industries' made in June 1941 from the data cards of some 94,000 AIF men, nearly one-seventh of all the men who served in the Army and a higher proportion of those who saw action.

Table 4: Employment background of AIF recruits by industry (to May 1941)

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Labourers	20,409	21.7
Commerce/Finance	10,005	10.7
Clerical (inc. public admin & prof)	13,150	14.0
Factories: metal	5916	6.3
Factories: other	5929	6.3
Agricultural etc	12,263	13.1
Motor drivers	7730	8.2
Building	4316	4.6
Other	14,148	15.1
Total	93,866	100

Source: AAV: MP 508/1, file 304/750/14.



Table 5 comes from the 1942-3 census already mentioned, and shows the civil occupation and grade of employment stated by a 10 per cent sample.

Table 5: Usual civil occupations and grades of employment, army census 1942-43 (10% sample)

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Employers</i>	<i>Self-employed</i>	<i>Employed</i>	<i>Unemployed</i>	<i>Assisting</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total No</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Fishing, trapping	9	98	34	-	-	-	141	0.3
Rural	780	1515	5083	28	292	7	7705	18.2
Forestry	16	83	303	3	-	1	406	1.0
Mining	11	103	751	4	-	1	870	2.1
Industrial	297	288	9849	53	5	7	10499	24.8
Building	219	180	2210	18	3	4	2634	6.2
Transport	199	349	3438	33	9	-	4028	9.5
Commerce	374	450	5719	21	10	-	6574	15.5
Clerical/admin	168	177	5933	26	17	7	6328	14.9
Entertainment	27	66	312	5	3	-	413	1.0
Domestic	105	103	925	7	4	-	1144	2.7
Other	3	2	1295	68	4	4	1376	3.2
Unemployed*	-	-	-	-	-	232	232	0.6
Total	2208	3414	35852	266	347	263	42350	-
Per cent**	5.2	8.1	84.7	0.6	0.8	0.6	-	-

Notes

* "Not gainfully occupied"

** Per cent in each grade of employment

"Grades of employment" are the horizontal categories in the top row.

"Occupational groups" are the vertical categories in the left column.

Source: AAV: MP 729/6, file 58/401/485.

As the compiler of the original table noted, only 0.6 per cent said that they were unemployed at the time of enlistment, compared with an unemployment rate of 12.5 per cent among wage earners at the outbreak of the war: clearly many previously unemployed men did not record the fact, and thus there must be some inaccuracies in other parts of the table.

An additional problem in the tables is that men in a large and increasing number of civil occupations were not permitted to join the armed forces unless their technical skills could be of use there, and thus volunteers from these 'reserved' occupations had to lie to be accepted; their untruths are in the tables. Nevertheless, some important trends can be discerned. First, Australian soldiers were not predominantly bushmen or farmers. More of them are defined here as office workers than as agricultural or rural workers, and it seems that industrial labourers predominated over farmers.

Employers appeared in the Army in a ratio commensurate with their prevalence in civil life. 'Workers on own account' were less common in civil life than in the AIF (8.1 per cent compared with 11.5 per cent), while employees and 'helpers without pay' were proportionately over-represented (86.6 per cent compared with 82.8).

The figures in these tables represent more than the fighting units. By 1945, only one man in three or four could be defined as a 'front-line' soldier, and, although this was the furthest extent of the growth in the army's tail, one cannot be sure whether men in some civil occupations were more likely to be allocated to fighting units than those in others. Beaumont shows that 80.8 per cent of privates and 62.9 per cent of NCOs in the combat-oriented force that was sent to defend Ambon in 1941 were 'manual' workers of varying degrees of skill. Most of the officers, however, came from non-manual, 'inspectional', 'managerial' and 'high administrative' occupations.

Although combat soldiers and men observing them often noted the great occupational diversity within their ranks, and every infantry battalion probably had its share of intellectual privates and NCOs, it does seem reasonable to assume that the labouring end of the occupational spectrum was better represented in the front-line than further back, and in the Other Ranks than among the officers.

The newly-recruited wartime officer was more likely to have had pre-war military experience than his subordinates. In AIF units, most of the original officers and some NCOs had been militiamen before the war, whereas the majority of the privates had no military experience. Immediately before war broke out there were 80,000 men (all volunteers) in the militia, but this figure was quickly and drastically reduced because men were permitted to leave either for the AIF or on

certain occupational and marital grounds. As a consequence, many of those who eventually saw action in CMF units were without pre-war military experience.

Why, then, did Australians who had previously shown no interest in soldiering, many of whom probably shared the widespread Australian antipathy to peacetime soldiering, now decide to enlist or accept their call-up without making the appeal to which many were entitled?

Here it is not necessary to differentiate combat from support troops, for it seems to be natural for most enlisting soldiers to expect to fight. The motivations of so large a group were very diverse, and many recruits had more than one reason for joining; as well, the character and strength of stimuli to enlistment changed with fluctuations in the course of the war. Despite these difficulties, almost every source points to the primacy of three factors: a desire for adventure, a sense of duty, and a sense of the Australian military heritage. Although the financial rewards of service may have been a primary inducement for a few, and a secondary one for more, the so-called 'economic conscripts' were in a distinct minority.

The official historian, Gavin Long, defines the desire for adventure largely in terms of an urge to break away from boring or unhappy civilian lives. This is not the whole story, however, as the 'adventure' opened by enlistment could be less an escape from an old world than an entry into an unknown and exciting one. For the young, inexperienced and largely uneducated men that most soldiers were, overseas travel and war were not just an adventure, but what they called 'the great adventure'. It was the stuff of romance, often lasting at least until exposure to battle: 'Dark finds us well past Alex[andria] headed west towards El Alamaine [sic] the enemy and adventure', wrote one typically excited reinforcement in his desert diary.

G.H. Fearnside, one of the best writers on Australia's World War II soldiers, argues that 'Perhaps the call to adventure was the greatest motivation' for volunteers; certainly it continued to attract young men eager to test themselves, although the air force was even more popular. The lure of adventure was never greater than to the very first volunteers, who formed the 6th Division in 1939.

For several years after 1939, less personal motives seem to have become more pressing for potential recruits. The heaviest recruiting to the AIF occurred during the two or three months following the German invasion of France in May 1940. Part of the reason for this was probably the fact that it was now clear that 'the Phoney War' was over and men could be certain of their 'great adventure'. Enlistments rose on other occasions with reports of fighting. Yet too many observers noted the seriousness and unusual maturity of the fighting soldiers among these later reinforcements for opportunity to be the whole explanation; they found the cause in the recruits' sense of duty, which had supposedly been activated by wartime crises.

Unfortunately for our purposes, Australian front-line soldiers in the Second were rarely as willing as their First World War predecessors to talk openly of patriotic duty. Indeed, writers have often prefaced comments about the importance of such motivation by saying that hardened soldiers would much prefer to offer trivial and fabricated reasons, or none at all, than to confess to patriotic motivation.

Yet many undoubtedly had a desire to 'do one's bit': in the first years of the war to protect Britain, Australia, the Empire and even the world from the Germans; and from late 1941, when enlistments shot up again, to protect Australia from the Japanese. This attitude is well exemplified in a letter written home by a captain on Timor



at a depressing point in the war: 'I hope it never comes to the day when you would have to shoot Germans and Japs Dad ... That is why I joined up - to keep the cows away from Home.'

In a large post-war survey of motivation for readiness to go to war, 'duty' emerged as the single most important factor, with the related concepts of 'Australian nationalism' and 'Empire loyalty' second and third. In a poem about his battalion, a soldier wrote in Palestine of 'that patriotic urge that made us all depart'. Yet later in the poem he imagined the unit's eventual return to Australia and the pub where they would 'tell of thier [sic] adventures to a very eager crowd'. This combination of duty and adventure also exerted a powerful attraction on many other volunteers.

Patriotic duty had appeal throughout the war, but it was probably not so alluring from late 1943, when the threat to Australia and the Empire had passed. As mentioned, most new enlistments in the latter part of the war were very young, and they were probably strongly attracted by the prospect of adventure. Another motivation is indicated by a further development in the composition of the Army in the second half of the war: the huge growth in the proportion of AIF men in the army. Between November 1942 and the end of the war fewer than 21,000 new men joined AIF units, but more than 200,000 CMF men changed their status to AIF by volunteering for overseas service within their units.

This changeover occurred mainly because of desire for the prestige attached to the AIF membership. Its status derived largely from the First World War, although by 1943 the tradition of the Second AIF was also impressive and probably attractive. This urge to be associated with an awesome 'tradition of military prowess' existed throughout the Second World War.

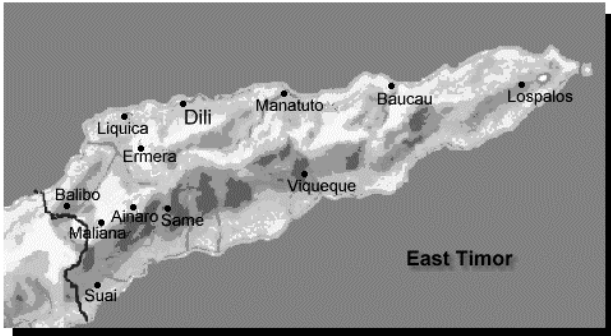
Who, then, was the typical Australian recruit destined for front-line service? The huge variety in serving soldiers threatens to defeat any attempt to define him, but the following characterisation may be attempted. Typical Australian fighting soldiers shared most or all of these characteristics: white; Australian born; aged in their 20s; healthy; height medium to tall; left school at 14; former wage-earning manual workers, who had enlisted largely because they believed that the war was morally right and because it offered them the prospect of an exciting adventure with the promise of legendary status.

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East Timor - a Brief History

Australian troops are again serving in Timor, or rather East Timor, this time as part of the United Nations INTERFET Peacekeeping force. For that reason it is perhaps worth reviewing the relationship between Australia and East Timor, how it started, why Australian troops were sent in WW2, and what lessons there are to be learned from the WW2 experience.



Timor is approximately 800 km North west of Darwin, an island of 34,175 sq km, 60% mountainous. At the outbreak of WW2, the population of West Timor was 400,000, with 500,000 in East Timor. A 1992 estimate put the respective populations as West Timor 1.3 million, East Timor 700,000. The island climate is tropical, with wet and dry seasons. The dry season is exceedingly dry, effected by dry, hot winds from Northern Australia. Water shortages and crop failures are not uncommon. The island has been subject to waves of colonisation, common in the Malay and Pacific islands. At the time of Portuguese "discovery" in 1512, the island contained groups of 14 language groups of Malay and Papuan origin, with the Tetum language of Central Timor being widespread. The Tetum are thought to have settled in Timor in the 14th Century, pushing the Atoni, perhaps the original inhabitants into West Timor. The Portuguese joined Chinese and Indonesian traders in the sandal wood trade. In the mid-17th Century, the Dutch occupied Kupang on the western end of Timor, eventually pushing the Portuguese to the eastern half. Thus the division of Timor began.

Until the end of the 19th Century, Portuguese authority over their half of Timor was never very strong. Their control was often effectively opposed by the *liurai*, the native Timorese rulers, and by the *mestico*, the influential descendants of Portuguese men and local women. The Dominican missionaries were also involved in revolts or opposition to the government. Eventually a series of rebellions between 1894 and 1912 led to bloody and conclusive 'pacification'. The colony had been on the decline much earlier, as the sandalwood trade fizzled out, and when Portugal fell into a depression after WW1, East Timor drifted into an economic torpor. Neglected by Portugal, it was notable only for its modest production of high- quality coffee and as a distant place of exile opponents of the Portuguese regime. The ordinary Timorese were subsistence farmers using the destructive *ladang* (slash-and-burn)

system, with maize (sweet corn) the main crop. The bulk of the Timor campaign took place in Portuguese (East) Timor between February 1942 and January 1943.

February 1942 had seen Australian and Dutch troops of "Sparrow Force"(primarily the 2/40th Battalion) defeated in Dutch (West) Timor after hard fighting that lasted four solid days against overwhelming superiority of Japanese numbers and air power. Those who escaped capture crossed the border into East Timor to join the 2/2 Commandos, who had been ordered to land there on 17 December 1941 against the wishes of the Portuguese administration, in what had been a clear breach of Portugal's strict neutrality in the war. This is important to note, because had the Allies respected Portuguese Timor's neutrality, it is likely that any Japanese occupation would have been a token one, small in scale and occupying only the strategic towns and ports.

Evidence suggests that Germany was pressuring its Japanese allies to avoid offending the Portuguese government in case it sided with the Allies and allowed use of the strategic Azores islands. The Australian guerrilla presence however, ensured a far larger and more brutal Japanese invasion, which began less than 24 hours after the morning bombing of Darwin - during the night of 19/20 February 1942 with amphibious landings on Dili beaches. Battle raged across East Timor for the following months, with the Australians using highly successful hit and run guerilla tactics. A massive and brutal occupation by the Japanese Imperial Army ensued, provoking the death of at least 50,000 East Timorese (more than 10% of the population).

The 2/2 Independent Company was largely made up of Western Australians, many from the bush. A number of the men had been professional kangaroo shooters and skills such as these were used to deadly effect against the much larger contingent of battle hardened Japanese. Out of contact with Australia for the first few months, men of the Independent Companies apparently often joked that they should be called the Dependent Companies, such was their reliance on assistance from the East Timorese and Portuguese locals. For example, young East Timorese would attach themselves as guides and helpers to Australian soldiers. These "criados" turned out to be invaluable to the Australians in the subsequent bitter fighting with the Japanese. Local people also provided shelter, hid the Australians from the Japanese, provided intelligence for ambushes and location of the enemy, carried guns and helped look after the wounded, and fought alongside the Australians.



Commandos of Sparrow Force attack a Japanese village on Timor with the support of local natives.

This support persisted despite intensive Allied bombing of Japanese held areas, including the capital Dili, which was almost totally flattened. East Timorese obtained for the Australians the essential parts for the building of a radio (dubbed "Winnie the War Winner"), with which the Australians were able to re-contact Darwin, and found to their joy that Australia had not been invaded (as Japanese propaganda had led them to believe). Darwin was similarly amazed to find them alive and active as they had believed them to have been inevitably killed. The news of their successful resistance was a great morale booster to an Australian people still in shock at the seemingly unstoppable Japanese advance through Southeast Asia. Australian filmmaker Damien Parer was secretly sent to East Timor to record the heroic campaign of the Australian soldiers.

But this friendship was not lost on the Japanese who were soon taking reprisals against the locals in Australian-held areas. If an ambush occurred in the area of a village it would be assumed (usually correctly) that the locals were helping the Australians. The same would occur if an Australian size and shape boot print was found, or a cigarette butt. Barbarity and sadism were common as a means of intimidation and coercion. The Japanese also brought in soldiers from Dutch (West) Timor (now Indonesia), the feared bombelas, or Black Columns, to make war on the East Timorese. The Australians may not have always seen the impact that their military successes were having on the local people. Given the ethnically diverse nature of the population, there is some evidence that internal tribal fighting was also increasingly bloody, and indeed this is one of the reasons cited for the Australian withdrawal in December 1942.

The commandos had fought so effectively that they were able to inflict losses of about 1,500 on the Japanese forces

losing only about 40 men themselves. There are accounts of ambushes where 40 to 50 Japanese would be killed and the Australians emerged unscathed. Japanese frustration led to reinforcements. Initially Japanese numbers were about 5,000 rising to about 10,000 before the commandos left in early 1943. In the last years of the war, when the East Timorese suffered on alone, Japanese numbers are estimated to have reached 20 thousand.

In 1944, to keep spirits and resistance up, Australian planes dropped leaflets written in Portuguese over East Timor. The bold headline - now forgotten, it seems - read "Os Vossos Amigos Noa Vos Esquecem" - 'Your friends will not forget you' ... During this time small intelligence groups from the Australian Z Force entered East Timor but the overwhelming Japanese presence and the capture of an Australian radio meant Z Force were not as successful as the commandos had earlier been.

Australian historian C. Wray, in his book *Timor 1942* summarises the great assistance that was given:

"the Australians received the willing co-operation of the Timorese people who not only provided the commandos with food, portage and assistance, but also with warnings of Japanese movements. Without this assistance the Australian force would soon have been flushed out and destroyed. The contrast with Dutch Timor [now Indonesia], where the natives refused to assist Allied troops and betrayed them to the Japanese, was significant. ... The Timorese paid a heavy price for their support of the Australians ... hundreds were imprisoned, tortured or killed by the Japanese on suspicions of harbouring Australians. Their villages were burned, livestock killed and crops destroyed. While exact calculation of the number of Timorese who died during the years of the Second World War is impossible, it has been estimated that between 40,000 and 70,000

Timorese died ... their losses were enormous and the sacrifices suffered and the friendship given by many Timorese during the difficult days of mid to late 1942 were something which the Australians who fought on Timor would never forget."

In the Timor campaign, many acts of heroism had taken place and many of the men were subsequently decorated. It seems strange that the campaign has faded from the official record and the commemorations associated with the Australia Remembers year, given the great strategic significance of the campaign, which far outstripped the minimal loss of Australian life.

Wray again:

"Most importantly the guerilla activities on Portuguese Timor had led the Japanese to fear possible Allied attempts to retake the island. As a result, battle-hardened enemy troops from the 48th Division had been diverted to Timor at a time when they could have been used to effect in the New Guinea campaign. The resistance on Timor also dampened any Japanese desire to profit from the rapid conquest of South East Asia and the South West Pacific by landing in northern Australia."

While staff from the Australian War History Unit were sent to East Timor after the end of hostilities in 1945, this was primarily to ascertain the fate of any Australians who had died or been captive in Timor.

There was no official attempt to find out what had happened to the local people as a result of the Australian presence. Those Japanese who were put to trial were those who had committed crimes against Australians, not against the East Timorese. East Timor lost one of the highest percentages of their population of all countries in the Second World War. After the war, no investigation took place and no compensation was offered to the East Timorese.

By the end of the war, between 40,000 and 70,000 East Timorese had died. After the war the Portuguese resumed full control. The turning point came in 1974 when a military coup in Portugal overthrew the Salazar dictatorship. The new government sought to discard the remnants of the Portuguese empire as quickly as possible. With the real possibility of East Timor becoming an independent state, two major political groups, the Timorese Democratic

Union (UDT) and the Timorese Social Democrats (later known as Fretilin), quickly formed in the colony. A third group, known as Apodeti, was a minor player, but its stated preference for integration with Indonesia eventually turned it into little more

than a front for Indonesia's goals. Although both major political groups advocated independence for East Timor, Fretilin gained the edge over the UDT, partly because of its more radical social policies. Indonesian leaders had had their eyes on East Timor since the 1940s, and as Fretilin was regarded by them as communist, they were itching for a reason to step into East Timor. It came on 11 August 1975, when the UDT staged a coup in Dili which led to a brief civil war between it and Fretilin. Military superiority lay from the outset with Fretilin; by the end of August, the bulk of the fighting was over and the UDT withdrew to Indonesian Timor.

Fretilin proved surprisingly effective in getting things back to normal, but by the end of September Indonesia had decided on a takeover. East Timor and Fretilin now faced Indonesia alone; the Portuguese were certainly not coming back. On 7 December the Indonesians launched their attack on Dili. From the start the invasion met strong resistance from Fretilin troops, who quickly proved their worth as guerilla fighters. Though East Timor was officially declared Indonesia's 27th province on 16 July 1976, Fretilin kept up regular attacks on the Indonesians, even on targets very close to Dili, until at least 1977. But gradually, Indonesia's military strength and Fretilin's lack of outside support took their effect. The cost of the takeover to the East Timorese was huge.

International humanitarian organisations estimate that about 100,000 people may have died in the hostilities and from the disease and famine that followed. Large sections of the population were relocated for 'security reasons', and lost contact with ancestral sites. By 1989, Fretilin appeared to have been pushed back to just a few hidden hideouts in the far east of the island and Indonesia was confident to open up East Timor to foreign tourists. On 12 November 1991, about 1000 Timorese staged a rally at a cemetery where they had gathered to commemorate the death of an independence activist two weeks earlier. Indonesian troops opened fire on the crowd. The number killed was variously reported from 19 to 200. Other unconfirmed reports claim scores of injured people were killed in the days following the incident. In the wake of the 1991 massacre, Indonesia once again restricted travel to and around East Timor.

Books Probably the best account of events surrounding the Indonesian invasion of East Timor is John Dunn's *Timor - A People Betrayed* (Jacaranda Press, Brisbane, Australia, 1984). Dunn was Australian consul in East Timor from 1962 to 1964; he was also part of an Australian government fact-finding mission to East Timor from June to July 1974, and returned in 1975, just after the Fretilin-UDT war. To balance Dunn's book, read *Timor: The Stillborn Nation*, by Bill Nicol (Widescope International, Melbourne, Australia, 1978), which tends to criticise Fretilin's leaders and places much more blame on the Portuguese. For the inside story from the Fretilin point of view, read *Funu: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor*, by Jose Ramos Horta (Red Sea Press, New Jersey, USA, 1987). Horta is Fretilin's United Nations representative.

THE ASL QUIZ WE'D LIKE TO SEE

1. What you'll hear them say

1.1. Match the ASL player with their characteristic expression

- A Paul Seage
- B Jamie Westlake
- C Mark Bretherton
- D Captain Nutrageous
- E Alan Smee
- F Homer Simpson

"Spare Me!" _____

"Crumbs!" _____

"Nut Rageous!" _____

"D'oh" _____

"Chocolates!" _____

Grim silence as he scratches his beard and stares at the board..... _____

2. Endangered Species

2.1 What is the most common counter used in ASL scenarios?

- A King Tiger
- B Panther
- C 6-5-8 SS squad
- D 7-4-7 US paratroop

2.2 What is the least common counter used in ASL scenarios?

- A Sherman Firefly
- B 17 pdr AT gun
- C Russian FB
- D US 6-6-6 1st line infantry

3. Still At Large and living in Brazil, Argentina etc....

Recently there has been considerable discussion on the mailing list about the behaviour of the SS etc. These questions will determine where your *own* views really lie.

3.1 I live in...

- A a unit
- B a house
- C a sangar
- D the Fuhrerbunker

3.2 I drive...

- A a car
- B a truck
- C a soft vehicle
- D a Kubelwagen

3.3 My worst nightmare is.....

- A Giant squirrels enslave the human race and force us to work in their nut mines
- B MMP sub contract all play testing and play balancing functions to TOT and CH
- C The upcoming module on the Fruit pickers War “Oranges of death” is delayed
- D In 1942, the tide of the war turns. German armies are pushed back on all fronts after defeats at Stalingrad, El Alamein and the Atlantic. In 1945, the Reich is defeated and Adolf commits suicide.

4. What you *won't* hear them say

4.1 Match the ASL player with the sentence they are *least* likely to use

- A I always prefer a studied careful defence to a mad attack
- B I prefer to play quickly at the risk of making mistakes

Paul Haseler
Mark McGilchrist

5. ASL 90210: Predator

5.1 Which statement was NOT made by Mac?

- A Time to get ol' painless out of the bag
- B We all got scores to settle
- C I can't believe Jim Hopper walked into an ambush
- D Up there...up in them trees...

5.2 What are the characteristics of the minigun?

- A 20FP, 3 ROF, 4PP
- B 24FP, 3 ROF, 3PP
- C 16FP, 4 ROF, 5PP
- D Heavy payload, 6ROF, portable only by rock n roll wrestlers and ultimate fighters

5.3 (Bonus short answer) How many men were in Jim Hoppers squad? _____

6. Short answer question

6.1 Who is the most nutrageous ASL player you know? Why?

7. Essay question

7.1 “The internet, in particular the ASL mailing list, is a positive force in the ASL world” Discuss this statement, using examples to justify your response.

The Paddington Bears

ASL Club



Bear Meetings in 2000

At Paddington RSL Club*, Sydney (10AM to 6PM) on the first Saturday of the month (except if underlined)

Saturday 8 January

Saturday 2 July

Saturday 5 February

Saturday 5 August

Saturday 4 March

Saturday 2 September

Saturday 1 April

Saturday 7 & Sunday 8 October

Saturday 6 May

Saturday 4 November

Saturday 3 June

Saturday 2 December

ASL Tournaments in 2000

TACTICS	Perth, WA	15 – 16 January (SAT, SUN)
CANCON	Canberra, ACT	22 – 24 January (SAT, SUN, MON)
ANZACon	Melbourne, VIC	22 – 25 April (SAT, SUN, MON, TUE)
SAGA	Sydney, NSW	10 – 12 June (SAT, SUN, MON)
CONCLAVE	Sydney, NSW	8 – 9 July (SAT, SUN)
OCTOBear	Sydney, NSW	7 – 8 October (SAT, SUN)

For more information about playing ASL with the Paddington Bears, contact:

Paul Haseler 9358 5981 or **Mark McGilchrist 9567 6382**

or Bearzmail : **mmjm@ozemail.com.au**

Bearzpage : **www.ozemail.com.au/~mmjm/index.html**

* All persons on the premises at Paddington RSL Club must be RSL Club members if they live within 5 kms of it, or otherwise they must be guests of members; RSL Club membership is reasonable, readily available and recommended.